

income are not well served by H.R. 5. Compensation for economic damages for minorities and women is often already much less than those awarded to white males. In a case with caps on punitive damages and the calculated economic ones, if the individual is working for minimum wage, unemployed, a homemaker or a child, awards will be small and possibly not meet the real needs of the individual or their family.

But who knows what a young person's potential might be, or even that of an adult. There are Members serving in this body who were once on welfare. If they had filed for malpractice under what is proposed in H.R. 5, their award would not have reflected the potential they have now realized. I say that to say that we cannot project what a person's earning potential might be.

Then H.R. 5 also caps HMOs. That and politics is what the provisions of that bill are really about, protecting the corporations, as has been offered time and time again in different ways for different businesses in just about every committee, all under the guise of helping the consumer or the little guy.

Medical providers do not want to bear the brunt of political battles. They need real help. Their patients need their doctors and other health care providers. That is why I support the Conyers-Dingell substitute, and I hope they are given a fair rule today so that we can put the two bills side by side. There is no way H.R. 5 can measure up to it.

The Democratic bill includes measures that have been proven to work at reducing malpractice insurance rates. If one thing is clear from States' experience, it is that caps alone do not work. The Medical Malpractice and Insurance Reform Act of 2003, the Conyers-Dingell bill, does not cap damages for corporations. It does not apply caps at all, and it only applies to physicians and other health professionals. It also has a better statute of limitations provision, which especially protects injured children.

The Democratic substitute has several provisions that would cut down frivolous claims, including sanctions for attorneys and physicians, and it provides for alternate dispute resolution that could enable patients to avoid litigation costs altogether.

In addition to creating an advisory commission on medical malpractice insurance, it brings insurance companies under antitrust laws that prevent price fixing and requires savings realized through the provisions of the bill to go toward reducing premium costs, and there are several other great provisions that time does not permit me to list this evening.

Madam Speaker, I came to the floor this evening because there are a lot of misconceptions about H.R. 5 which have caused medical organizations and many of my colleagues to support it. In my opinion, the situation for health care providers is so bad that we are grasping at any straw to save the practices we have dedicated our lives to. But our health care providers and their

patients need more than the weak straw offered by H.R. 5. We need real reform, real help.

The Democratic substitute would provide that help and help get us started on the kind of reform that will bring long-term relief to providers and be fair to all parties concerned. I hope this bill will be on the floor tomorrow, and I hope that all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support and pass it. And then let us move on to fix all of the other problems in our health care system and provide health insurance coverage for everyone.

#### THE BREAKDOWN OF CYPRUS PEACE TALKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, it is with a profound sense of disappointment that I rise today to speak about the breakdown of the United Nations-sponsored Cyprus peace talks at the Hague this week.

Responsibility for this unfortunate setback in the peace process rests largely with one man, Mr. Rauf Denktaş, the Turkish Cypriot leader who rejected U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's plan to end the 29-year division of Cyprus. A large share of the blame also rests with the Turkish military and hard-line nationalists in Ankara, who have maintained the illegal Turkish military occupation of Cyprus since Turkish troops invaded the island in 1974. If the government of Turkey were sincere about settling the Cyprus problem, they could have put the necessary pressure on Mr. Denktaş to say yes to the U.N. plan.

In sharp contrast to Mr. Denktaş, the newly-elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, said yes to a public referendum on the Secretary General's plan. His response is consistent with years of efforts by the government of Cyprus to try to negotiate in good faith to reunify the country, efforts that have been consistently rebuffed by the separatist Turkish Cypriot regime.

The U.N. peace process, which is strongly supported by the United States and the international community has sought to reunite Cyprus as a single sovereign bicomunal federation. With Cyprus poised to join the European Union in May 2004, Secretary General Annan chose to get personally involved in bringing the two sides together, asking the two leaders to put the U.N. plan before their people in a referendum. President Papadopoulos said he was prepared to do so. But, unfortunately, Mr. Denktaş was not prepared to agree to put the plan to a referendum. It is a shame that the Secretary General's personal diplomacy was met by this kind of flat-out rejection.

In fact, it is the Turkish-Cypriot community which has held unprecedented public demonstrations in favor of the U.N. plan who will be the major

victims of Mr. Denktaş's intransigence, cut off from benefits of the EU membership that the rest of the island will enjoy.

Despite this failure, Madam Speaker, I praise President Papadopoulos for stressing that the Greek-Cypriot side will continue the efforts for reaching a solution to the Cyprus question both before and after Cyprus joins the EU.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS), who has just been fantastic on this issue.

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Florida, for his enduring leadership in this very important cause. I join him in his expression of dismay that this very hopeful effort has apparently been sidetracked, and I would hope this Congress could urge Mr. Denktaş and his Turkish military sponsors to reconsider this decision.

□ 1815

Madam Speaker, I believe that the principal division between the enlightened view of the Greek Cypriots and the regressive view of Mr. Denktaş is their willingness to let the people decide their own fate.

In the set of principles articulated by Kofi Annan and the United Nations, there were many concessions made by the Greek Cypriots. There were many difficult decisions that the Greek Cypriot government would have to endure. That regime, because it is democratic, was willing to put that question to the people in the Greek part of Cyprus.

On the other hand, Mr. Denktaş and his Turkish military sponsors were unwilling to let the voice of the Turkish Cypriot people determine their own fate. They have raised their voices on the streets and expressed overwhelming popular sentiment for a lawful and humane reunification of Cyprus. It is a tragedy that the voices of the Turkish Cypriots have been silenced by the short-term decision by Mr. Denktaş and by his Turkish military sponsors.

Madam Speaker, I join the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), who has led us for so many years in this effort in urging Mr. Denktaş and the Turkish Government to let the people of the Turkish part of Cyprus speak. Let them act for peace; and I believe we will, in fact, achieve peace.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MUSGRAVE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS) is recognized for 5 minutes.